

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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SUBJECT: VESCO'S INTERVIEW WITH SAN JOSE'S LEADING
NEWSPAPER, LA NACION

REF: SAN JOSE A-173

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: ROBERT VESCO'S INTERVIEW WITH
LA NACION HAS NOW BEEN PUBLISHED IN FOUR PARTS.
IT ADDS LITTLE NEW TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, BUT CLEARLY IS
A MAJOR ATTEMPT ON VESCO'S PART TO SECURE POPULAR
ACCEPTABILITY IN COSTA RICA. END SUMMARY.

2. ROBERT VESCO'S INTERVIEW WITH LA NACION WAS
PUBLISHED PROMINENTLY IN FOUR PARTS ON SEPTEMBER 14, 15, 16,
AND 17. VESCO REPORTEDLY GRANTED THE INTERVIEW TO
LA NACION BECAUSE THE PAPER HAD SHOWN RESPECT FOR
HIS WISHES IN NOT PUBLISHING PHOTOGRAPHS OF HIS FAMILY
TAKEN RECENTLY BY ONE OF THE PAPER'S PHOTOGRAPHERS AT
A LOCAL RESTAURANT. THIS INTERVIEW IS THE BEST
EXAMPLE TO DATE OF VESCO'S RECENT PUBLICITY
EFFORT TO PORTRAY HIMSELF IN MORE HUMAN TERMS
AND THUS HOPEFULLY WIN SOME SYMPATHY WITH THE
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COSTA RICAN PUBLIC. A SIMILAR, ALTHOUGH SHORTER,
INTERVIEW WITH EL DIARIO'S EDITOR JULIO SUNOL WAS

PUBLISHED RECENTLY BY THIS PAPER. LA REPUBLICA'S EDITOR HAS ALSO BEEN APPROACHED, BUT AS FAR THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THERE HAS BEEN NO INTERVIEW WITH THIS PAPER.

3. THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS SUMMARIZE THE MAIN POINTS OF THE VESCO THREE-HOUR INTERVIEW WITH MIGUEL SALGUERO OF LA NACION:

4. AFTER NOTING THE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND BUSTLING ACTIVITY OF VESCO'S SAN JOSE OFFICE AND THE FACT THE BODYGUARDS WERE PRESENT, THE REPORTER WRITES THAT VESCO "AGREED" TO GRANT THE INTERVIEW BECAUSE HE NOW WISHES TO HAVE MORE CONTACT WITH COSTA RICAN JOURNALISTS, WHILE KEEPING HIMSELF AT ARM'S LENGTH FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS.

5. VESCO WAS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID WHEN THE WRITER ASKED ABOUT THE APPARENTLY HEAVY SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS THAT HE FEARED AN ATTEMPT ON HIS PERSON BY SOMEONE WHO MIGHT BE STIMULATED BY THE ADVERSE PUBLICITY. ALSO, HE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HE FEARED AN EXTRA-LEGAL ATTEMPT TO TAKE HIM TO THE UNITED STATES PRESUMABLY PERPETRATED BY US OFFICIALS. VESCO APPARENTLY SHOWED THE REPORTER AN EXTRACT OF AN ARTICLE DATED IN WASHINGTON WHICH SUGGESTED THAT THE USG MIGHT TRY TO SPIRIT VESCO TO THE US MUCH AS IT HAS DONE IN CASES OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS.

5. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE SIZE OF HIS INVESTMENTS VESCO REPORTEDLY SAID HE "PREFERRED NOT TO BE SPECIFIC," BUT ADDED THAT HE HAS INVESTMENTS IN THE CARIBBEAN, CENTRAL AMERICA, LONDON, HONG KONG, MOROCCO, BEIRUT, LUXEMBOURG, GERMANY, THE UNITED STATES, AND OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD.

6. WITH REGARD TO VESCO'S REASONS FOR COMING TO COSTA RICA, HE REPORTEDLY TOLD THE INTERVIEWER THAT HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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HAD CAREFULLY LOOKED INTO THE COUNTRY AND DECIDED THAT, COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTRIES, IT HAD TREMENDOUS

POTENTIAL FOR BUSINESS GROWTH. HE REPORTEDLY WAS IMPRESSED WITH COSTA RICA'S STRONG DEMOCRACY, JUST AND WELL-ESTABLISHED LAWS, GOOD PEOPLE, AND CLIMATE.

7. VESCO WAS QUOTED AS SAYING WHEN ASKED ABOUT HIS \$200,000 CONTRIBUTION TO PRESIDENT NIXON'S CAMPAIGN THAT OTHER US COMPANIES HAD MADE SIMILAR

CONTRIBUTIONS. HE REPORTEDLY ADDED THAT THOSE INTERESTED IN HIS RETURN TO THE US ARE NOT SO MUCH INTERESTED IN HIM AS THEY ARE IN PUTTING THE PRESIDENT IN A "DIFFICULT POSITION." VESCO WAS THEN ASKED ABOUT THE SEC SUIT ALLEGING HE DEFRAUDED IOS OF \$224 MILLION. HE REPORTEDLY SAID HE WAS NOT OBLIGED TO RESPOND TO THE SEC BECAUSE FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS ALL OF HIS BUSINESS HAS BEEN OUT OF THE US. MOREOVER, HE REPORTEDLY SAID, THE SEC IS NOT ACCUSING HIM OF FRAUD, BUT OF TAKING \$224 MILLION OUT OF THE US AND INVESTING IT IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES. NO ONE, HE REPORTEDLY ADDED, HAS TAKEN THE TIME TO CAREFULLY STUDY THE SUIT AND LEARN THE TRUTH.

8. VESCO REPORTEDLY DENIED HAVING BEEN NOTIFIED OFFICIALLY OF AN ARREST ORDER OUT FOR HIM IN SWITZERLAND, BUT ADDED THAT THE SEC HAS TRIED IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES INCLUDING COSTA RICA TO GET AT HIM. HE APPARENTLY SAID THAT SIMON NUSBAUM HAD BEEN SENT DOWN BY THE SEC TO HARASS HIM.

9. IN RESPONSE TO ANOTHER QUESTION, THIS ONE ASKING IF HE WAS STILL AN AMERICAN CITIZEN, VESCO WAS SAID TO HAVE REPLIED CATEGORICALLY "NO" AND ADDED THAT HIS CURRENT CITIZENSHIP HE REGARDED AS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE.

10. AT ANOTHER POINT, VESCO REPORTEDLY SAID HE HAD NO POLITICAL INTEREST IN PRESIDENT FIGUERES' GOVERNMENT ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE HAD GREAT RESPECT FOR FIGUERES. VESCO WAS SAID TO HAVE

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REMARKED THAT HE HAD INVESTED MORE MONEY WITH PEOPLE WITHOUT CONNECTIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT THAN THOSE WITHIN IT. VESCO REPORTEDLY GAVE AS REASONS FOR HIS INVESTMENT IN COSTA RICA HIS DESIRE TO HELP THE COUNTRY IN ECONOMIC TERMS. VESCO REPORTEDLY SAID HIS OPERATIONS CENTER IS IN NASSAU, WHILE HIS RESIDENCE IS IN COSTA RICA.

1. VESCO'S INTERVIEW AS PUBLISHED IN LA NACION WILL BE POUCHED ON SEPTEMBER 18 FOR INTERESTED READERS IN THE DEPARTMENT AND THE SEC.
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